

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-02

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 IO-03 SSO-00

INRE-00 PRS-01 DRC-01 /059 W
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O 140616Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5924

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6099

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR KS JA

SUBJECT: DETERIORATION IN ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS

REF: A SEOUL 6089; B STATE 201887 C TOKYO 11824

1. SEVERAL TIMES DURING EVENING SPET 13, LATEST AT MIDNIGHT, VICE FONMIN LHO SHIN-HONG CALLED CHARGE TO STATE JAPANESE HAD NOT YET CONTACTED KOREANS REGARDING INSTRUCTIONS JAPANESE EMBASY HAD INFORMED THEM WERE ON THEIR WAY FROM TAO KYO. EACH TIME CHARGE RESPONDED IN NEGATIVE TO VICE MIN'S QUESTION AS TO WHETHER CHARGE HAD ANY EXPLANATION FOR LACK OF CONTACT FROM JAPANESE. VICE MIN SAID HIS SUPERIORS WERE BECOMING HOURLY MORE ANGRY WITH JAPANESE FOR WHAT APPEARED TO BE DELIBERAT STALL. EXPECTATION OF SOME WORD FROM JAPANESE HAD CAUSED ROKG TO POSTPONE TV APPEARANCE BY PRIME MINISTER WHICH WOULD HAVE SET IN MOTION PLAN OF ACTION INVOLVING ULTIMATUM, WITHDRAWAL OF AMBASSADOR, ETC.

2. JAPANESE COUNSELOR OKAZAKI, WITH CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT, PROVIDED EXPLANATION TO CHARGE IN CONFIDENCE EARLY MORNING SEPT 14. HE SAID THAT TELEPHONE CALL FROM
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GAIMUSHO TO JAPANESE EMBASSY SEOUL LATE AFTERNOON SEPT 13

HAD SIMPLY ADVISED JAPANESE EMBASSY TO SIT TIGHT UNTIL INSTRUCTIONS BEING SENT HAD BEEN RECEIVED. UNFORTUNATELY, JAPANESE EMBASSY HAD INFORMED FON MIN THAT THEY WERE EXPECTING SOME WORD FROM TOKYO THAT EVENING. ON BASIS THIS INFORMATION, ROKG APPARENTLY POSTPONED ITS CONTEMPLATED ACTION. WHEN INSTRUCTINS ARRIVED, THEY SAID IN EFFECT THAT GOJ WAS NOT CONTEMPLATING FURTHER CHANGES IN THE LETTER OR OTHER ACTION IN CONNECTION WITH CURRENT IMPASSE (REF C). THIS MESSAGE PUT JAPANESE EMBASSY IN QUANDRY; TO DELIVER IT WOULD SURELY TRIGGER ROK ACTION, AND NOT TO SAY SOMETHING TO KOREANS WOULD OBVIOUSLY IRRITATE AND OFFEND THEM. JAPANESE EMBASSY CHOSE LATTER AS LESSER OF TWO EVILS AND HAS NOT YET EXPLAINED TO KOREANS ITS FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE.

3. WITH RESPECT TO JAPANESE POSITION, OKAZIKI INFORMED CHARGE THAT SOME MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF WITH ACCESS TO EXCELLENT KOREAN SOURCES WERE OF OPINION THAT STEAM WAS GOING OUT OF ROKG CAMPAIGN; IF JAPANESE HELD FIRM FOR NEXT FEW DAYS, ROKG COULD BE BROUGHT AROUND TO ACCEPTING THEIR POSITION. OKAZAKI ALSO SAID THAT ON OTHER HAND, JAPANESE EMBASSY WAS UNDER STRONG PRESSURE FROM PRESIDENT BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO DO SOMETHING SINCE ALL JAPANESE WERE BECOMING INCREASINGLY FEARFUL FOR THEIR LIVES AND PROPERTY.

4. WITH EXPLANATION PAR A 1 ABOVE AS BACKGROUND, CHARGE OBTAINED APPOINTMENT WITH VICE FONMIN AT 10:30 A.M. SEPT 14. FONMIN KIM DONG-JO, WALKING LIKE MAN IN TRANCE, JOINED CONVERSATION SHORTLY AFTER IT BEGAN. IN RESPONSE THEIR QUERY, CHARGE SAID HE COULD NOT OFFER EXPLANATION FOR JAPANESE FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE PREVIOUS EVENING. CHARGE DID, HOWEVER, PROVIDE SUBSTANCE OF STATE 201887, OMITTING WORD "MINOR" IN PARA 2 (B), SINCE HE DID NOT WISH KOREANS TO GO BACK TO JAPANESE TO CLAIM THAT USG FELT CHANGES ROKG IS SUGGESTING ARE "MINOR".

5. FONMIN SAID THEY WERE ENCOURAGED BY THIS WORD TO HOPE THAT JAPANESE MIGHT BE WILLING MAKE SOME MOVE, SINCE TOKYO WOULD LISTEN TO WASHINGTON'S ADVICE. HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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FONMIN CONCLUDED THAT FAILURE OF JAPANESE TO RESPOND LAST EVENING WAS NOT BASED ON CONSIDERATION OF DEPT'S APPROACH TO YASUKAWA, SINCE WORD OF IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED IN TOKYO UNTIL VERY LATE IN EVENING SEPT 13.

6. FONMIN ASKED CHARGE'S ADVICE AS TO WHETHER ROKG SHOULD WAIT FURTHER OR SHOULD CALL USHIROKU IN AND ISSUE ULTIMATUM TO HIM. CHARGE FIRMLY DECLINED TO OFFER PERSONAL

OR OFFICIAL ADVICE, AND REITERATED HIS PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS. CHARGE SAID DECISION ON COURSES OF ACTION, AS WELL AS ON ANY POSSIBLE CHANGES IN TANAKA LETTER, HAD TO BE DETERMINED BY TWO GOVTS DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

7. FONMIN THEN TOOK PHONE CALL FROM BLUE HOUSE, DURING COURSE OF WHICH HE PASSED ON WORD OF DEPT'S APPROACH TO YASUKAWA. DURING HIATUS, VICE FONIM HEATEDLY EXPLAINED THAT ALL KOREANS WANTED WAS TO MAKE JAPANESE SHOW THEIR "SINCERITY." CHARGE EXPRESSED PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING BUT SAID THAT REST OF WORLD, WHICH DID NOT COMPREHEND COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JAPANESE AND KOREANS, SIMPLY WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW FATE OF FAR-REACHING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS IN THIS PART OF WORLD SHOULD HAVE TO DEPEND ON A FEW WORDS IN A LETTER. AFTER FONMIN HAD HUNG UP, HE AROSE TO LEAVE. CHARGE ASKED WHAT COURSE OF ACTION HE CONTEMPLATED. FONMIN RESPONDED WITH SHRUG THAT "NOW WE HAVE TO MAKE SOME DECISION." VICE FONMIN ASSURED CHARGE THAT USG WOULD BE INFORMED OF ANY DECISION IN ADVANCE.

8. DURING CONVERSATION, CHARGE ALSO MADE POINT, WHICH HE ASKED KOREANS TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY, THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS OF TWO PREVIOUS DAYS FROM WASHINGTON CONTAINED STRONG THREAD OF CONCERN ABOUT MANNER IN WHICH ROKG HAD APPARENTLY CHANGED ITS POSITION DURING COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPANESE. CHARGE STRESSED THAT USG WAS TRYING TO BE HELPFUL, BUT WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING FURTHER SHIFTS IN KOREAN POSITION UNLESS THEY WERE IN DIRECTION OF CONCILIATION.

9. SINCE EVEN LARGER AND NOISIER DEMONSTRATIONS THAN ALL PREVIOUS DAYS WAS IN PROGRESS DURING THIS DISCUSSION, CHARGE AGAIN WENT OVER DANGERS THAT THESE DEMONSTRATIONS

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POSE FOR WHOLE SITUATION.

10. COMMENT: I HAVE FEELING THAT ROKG WILL WAIT TO SEE WHETHER APPROACH REF B WILL HAVE ANY EFFECT ON JAPANESE POSITION BEFORE TAKING FURTHER ACTION. EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, KOREANS WILL HAVE TO MAKE FORMAL GESTURE OF DISPLEASURE UNLESS JAPANESE MAKE SOME MOVE. DEPT'S APPROACH MAY BE HELPFUL IN THIS RESPECT, AND IT WILL AT LEAST PREVENT KOREANS FROM FEELING WE HAVE LEANED IN JAPAN'S DIRECTION, SOMETHING I FEAR THEY WERE INCLINED TO DO FOLLOWING OUR PRESENTATIONS OF PREVIOUS TWO DAYS. ERICSON

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